## Evening Telegraph SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1954.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS 1864.

BUYING PRESENTS.

I have a happy troop of girls and boys,
That Christmas Eve will sare expect their toys;
No matter whether gold is low or high,
The Christmas presents fathers have to buy.
The Christmas present fathers have buy.
You tuy by pounds, and shillings, not by pence.
Boys must have jumping jacks, kites, drumand bulls:

and balls; Girls must have tiny cradles, and wax dolls— The dolls must be that kind that shut their eyes And jumping jacks must be the largest size. But in my household (I dislike to say) Are those who rather that to have their way; And went at least to say an hundred things; Some it for gods, or living Ka-tern kings. Greenbacks must go by hundreds. I declare dare not mure ur-and I will not swear-

Purchased diamonds, pearls, and sliver ware, Pop-gons, and beats, and branchets made of hair-And could not tell, should I attempt to try, The fancy articles I did not buy. Then took a package or the smaller things, (Light as a couch on old elliptic springs), Hoping thereby to avoid accident—
(They might be broken if they should be sent).
Then made a move, and stepped outside the

That was not all-I wish it was no more-The slippery sidewalss of this model town,
Excused my feet, and I ascended down—
The air was fall of junctacks in a trice,
And the subscriber flat upon the ice.
Now I am released from Christmas clutches,
But hobbling, malmed, and bruised, on crutches.

GLOBIOUS OLD CHRISTMAS Coston, time-honored, thrice-blessed, has directed that people should close up the old year, and greet the new year with festivity and rejoicing. This custom long aniedates the Christian Church has but confirmed and given it a holler sacction. Christmas is a festival of the Church. In every civilized nation there is some peculiar form of observance of Christmas. In England it has always been a merry making for high and low, in palace and hovel. The word In England It has always been a merry making for high and low, in palace and hovel. The word Christmas is there redoient of roast beef and plum-pudding, holly and mislictor, fua and frolic. In the olden times the tenants were re-galed at the Hall, and the festivities were presided over by the Lord and Lady of the Manor. old-fashioned Christmas is thus de-cribed —

"Then opened wide the Baron's hall, . tenant, serf, and all ; Power laid his rod of rule aside. And ceremony defied his pride. The heir with roses in his shoes, That night might village parmer choose; All bailed with uncontrolled delight, And genial voice, that happy night That to the Cottage, as the Crown, Brought tidings of salvation down. England was Merry England, when Old Christmas brought his sports again.
Twas Christmas broached the mightlest ale;
Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer 'Poor man's heart through half the year,' "

## CHRISTMAS IN A CELLAR.

A Strange Story About a Pantomime. More than three years ago I was sent away from London for the benefit of my health. It would be useless to mention in what breezy spot I spent my exile. Suffice it, that it was highly salubrious and intolerably dull. I was forbidden to read. Every day seemed to last a week, and every night a formight. How insignificant were the minor annoyances of draughts, pills, irritating under-clothing, and strict regimen, compared to that intolerable ennui!

What a thrill of pleasure I felt when a long strip of yellow paper informed me that the "Theatre Royal — would shortly open for a limited season"! Here was occupation for my dreary evenings. The Theatre Royal — did open, and I commenced an acquaintance with the "Acting Drams," as published by Camberland. After the performance I used to smoke a cigar (tobacco was strictly forbidden, but I smoked, hevertheless, in the coffee-room of the Rose and Crown Hotel; and there I met the actor who played the stern parents at the theatre, and was adamsant for four acts only to melt in the fifth, and consent to the union of his son or daughter as the case may be. He was a very gentlemanity veteran, quite of the old school—took sauff, and wore a felt, smiled whenever he was addressed, and had a fatherly manner, acquired by a long course of dramatic paternity. He used to tell singular anecdotes, more or less true, some of What a thrill of pleasure 1 felt when a long singular anecdotes, more or less true, some of them much less than more; among others, one which I thought interesting enough, having obtained his "kind permission," to reproduce.

I give it is his own words:

"Sinchport is assaport flown," he began, "situate
—as guide books say—four miles from the sea,
and everything in Suckport is of the sea, fishy. from the gift three-masted ship on the vane over the Town Hall, to the rope-walks, timber-yards, and old boats on the outskirts. Every man with money, no matter what his pursuits, keeps a y-cit; and it would almost seem as if the small try of fishermen's children were weaned on boat-

for I sm speaking of the year 18—) stood, as country theatres always do, at the most inconvenient end of a dirty lane—in fact, it stood upon a wharf, and had been a granary, or sore, or warehouse, or something of that sort; that wall at the end of what was used for the stage went right down into the dirty river, which, as you might see by the wet space between high and low water mark, washed it with refuse twice a day.

mark, washed it with refuse twice a day.
"It was eleven o clock, and a rainy morning, as I picked my steps over the petrified kidneys that did not pave the inne that led to the stage door. It was a melancholy lane, beginning with a little chapel rented by the primitive Maggletonians (junior branch), then going into stables and back premises; then asserting itself hideously with a reking slaughter-house in the centre; returning to stables and back premises. to stables and back premises, and terminating with a rabbit-hutch-looking stage door. Not an object could be seen but a misanthropic cock and three draggle-tailed hens. I walked on to the stage, which was as chill and cheerless as stages usually are on January mornings, and, as I looked into the vacant darkness visible, my old notion camerinto my head of the likeness of an empty

came into my head of the likeness of an empty theare to an empty coffin.

"It was a queer old building, that ex-warehouse that had been converted into a temple of the drama, and among other requirements for the dramatic art beasted extensive cellarage. Messrs, Cape & Corlander, the great wine merchants, at one time kept all their stock there, until one high tide the water rushed in, smashed the bottles, and so damaged Messrs. Cape & Corlander that they were forced to turn bankrupts—not that it hurt them, for afterwards they were richer men than over. Then extensive alteranot that it hurt them, for areawarist they were richer men than ever. Then excensive altera-tions were made, and thick walls built to keep out the tide, but Messrs, Cape & Coriander never again housed their wine there. I suppose they did not like the water mingling itself in their affairs so publicly.

"Nor a soul but myself had thought proper to be remetical for rehearsal. The first call was for

be punctual for rehearsal. The first call was for 'Pisarro,' at cleven; the pantonime to follow. Our massager, Mr. O'Warroboyle, never set a good example, and rehearsals usually began at all sorts of hours. Aunoyed at having left my comfortable fire, I went hack to the stage door, and stood

able fire, I went back to the stage door, and stood locking out into the rain.

"I'we men stood at the end of the lane. After exchanging a few words, one of them disappeared, and the other tramped up to me.

"This here the playhouse?" to asked.

"This is the theatre." I replied, trying to impress him, but failing signally.

"Ah yes; the ay-ter, if you like it better, he said. 'Mr. O'Warreboyle is manager, isn't he?

"The coolness of the man's questions and the rudeness of his manner annoyed me. I had played leading business—I was the 'Pisarro' of that evening. I therefore looked out into the rain, and feigned not to hear.

feigned not to hear.
"No offense, master, said the man, after a pause, but Mr. Terenes O'Warreboyle is mana-

ger, isn't he?'
"Without deigning to turn my head in the direction of his voice, I answered 'Yes.'
"'Is he in the way, master?'

"Sure " inquired the man, in a tone of the "This was too much | I turned upon my hoel

"This was too much! I turned upon my heel and walked back to the stage.

"A few minutes after the prompter, Sticknam, arrived, and shortly after Scandrey and Mrs. Poljambe, who played 'Valverde' and 'Elvira.'

"Now we can begin,' said I.

"I had no some uttered the words than I perceived by the light of a long slit or opening in the wall, which let in the cold and the rain, and did daty as a window, that Mrs. Poljambe was in lears. I asked what was the matter.

"Oh, that brute Foljambe 'seplied the lady; 'not home fill a pelock this morning, and tipsy as—augh! and she begas to ur.

"Mrs. Poljambe was other than her husband, and it was said led him a life. The real fact was, and in the Rouse they had not heard the steps and in the Rouse they had not heard the steps and in the Rouse they had not heard the steps and in the Rouse they had not heard

BUTTER STATE OF THE PARTY OF

Holjembo was a dranken little dog, and spent money faster than his majestic and telented day could carn it. Personally be was not worth his selt, but he was segaged for the sake of his wife. "'I wish he was dead, I do!" said the poor

"'Hush, hugh!' said I, 'don't say that.'
"'Hush, hugh!' said I moan it; a little wreth! I shall never know a moment's peace tilt he has dronk himself into his grave.'
"'Hosh,' I repeated, for I saw the figures of young Jutson and Dos more emerging from the com, ... Will be be here this morning?"

"Will be be here this morning?"

"No; he's in bed, little brute!"

"Rehearsal began. "Atalba" (Foljambe) was obsent, and so was "Rolla" (O Warrehoyle)—
Sicknam told as that O'W., so we had called him, had gine to Dundringham, to arrange about our opening there the following month. O W. would get have been a bad actor for a manager had he but been sillicted with such a terrible hoose. He had been educated at Triant College, Dublin—at teast he said so. I have never been in Iroint; but I should think Trinity must be a large college, for all the Irishmen I have ever met date from it. Picarro was run through—I mean the rehearsal, not the character—in the usual rambackle way; and then we commenced the pantomine, in which I went on for the 'Demon Singehia wig-off,' King of the Subterranean Salamaniera. The performance that night was for little Canka's benefit. Canka's was our property-man, and never acted exe pt upon his benefit, when he always played clown—which he considered to be a friumph of dramatic art; in fact, he was a disappointed Grimaldi, and I believe would have broken his heart if he had not been permitted to clown' cues in each town in the circuit.

"I get home about three, and dined. My wife token his heart if he had not been permitted to the hair drawers' with my black-ringlet wig. We asserted the pantomine to draw a good house. One Propper, the great banker, had promised his export. He only visited the theatre twice a casen—one at the bespeak of the conservative member, and once when Picarro was performed, which play he considered the finest modern production of the buman mind.

"During the whole of the day I felt an unac-

uction of the human mind. "During the whole of the day I felt an unac

countable depression of spirits that I could not shake off. However, at six o'cines, I started for the theatre, my carpet-bag in one hand, and my replier, muffled in a gun-case, in the other. I should here mention that the stage was on the same level as the ground, and that the genute-range describes your was immediately under the sen's dressing room was immediately under t single; the ladies, as was right they should, had a conformable room over the stage; but our dea was the most wretched place conceivable. It had formed part of the colarage that had been so locally rutions to Mesers. Cape & Coriander, and was a dingy hole. Though we put boards over that portion of the brick floor on which we have and made the stove red-hot, nothing could keep out the fearful cold, nor the dampearthy smell and liavor of wet saw just, unwashed bottle, and stale river. It was like dressing in a turnished sewer or dry drain; in truth, the cellar was beneath the level of the water at high title. the ladies, as was right they should, had

"Hach actor's dressing place was lighted by action a tin socket. O Warreboyle would not go the expense of gas-fittings; there was also, for the diffusion of a general light, a hoop susended from the ceiling with candles stuck in ita sort of cheep impromptu chandeller, such as is sometimes hung up in daucing-boolhe at country lairs. To gain this comfortless crypt we had to descend a flight of stone states, picturesquely worn and uneven as with heavy coopers and drunken cellarmen. Our dessing-place, or dressing-table, was merely a few stout planks natical together by the stage carpenter; and it had been a portion of the paternal thoughtfulness of our sufficied and emberprising manager to fix this dressing bench on the opposite side of the collar to the staircase, which gave us the trouble of crossing a floor whose every clammy brick seemed charged with cramps and rhoumatisms, and to be sworn camented foes to legs and feet cased in silk stockings, thin shoes, fleshings,

"Lute Canks had a very good house. The Proppers were in the stage box in regal state, Mr. Propper in the attitude of the country memer, with his fat hand thrust into his white valsteent, and lost among his frill. Every time Warreboyle uttered a patriotic sentiment in Dublin English, old Propper received it as if it were the toast of the evening, pulled the edge of his box with his disengaced hand, and cried, 'Hear, hear!' after the fashion of members of the House of Commons and convivial clubs. The effect was very funny. In the address to the Pernvian army (four of them) O'Warreboyle

"My br-r-reeve associates! Par-r-tners in "My br-r-reeve associates! Par-tiners in my toils, my feelings, and my feeme! Can R-rolla's wor-r-ds add vigor to the vir-r-tuous ener-r-gies that inspire your harruts?"

"No! No! interrupted Propper.

"The thr-r-one we honor-r is the people's choice! proceeded O'W. (not "Rolla"),

"Hear! Hear! said Propper.

"The laws that gov-ver-ru us are our brave fawthers' legace!"

fawthers' legacco!

hawthers' legaces!"
"So they are!' said Propper.
"The faith we r rever-rence teaches us to live
in bonds of amitee with all mankoind, with surest
hope of our Creator's mercee and r-re-war-rud

"Bravo! Very good!' from Propper,
"Tell your invadiliers this!"
"Yes! Yes!"
"And tell them, too, we seek so change

'Hear! he-an!' said the banker, perhaps "'And, least of all, such change as runy would br-r ing us!"

'BRA-vo!' shouted Propper, amid thunders "O'Warreboyle dared not offend the banker, but I knew he felt daggers, though he looked

"The piece went off very well, though that little wretch Foljambe was the tipsiest of "Atalibas." I observed that the eyes of his wife were still red, to observed that the eyes of his wife were still red, but she had reached the dignified and inajestic degree of conjugal quarrel, and took not the slightest notice of him, though spurred to it by his remarking, whenever she came near him, "Oh! isn't she cross?" The combat between me and that stupid Dossmore was rapturously ap-planded, and the curtain fell amid great enthu-siasm; O'W, as was his custom, insisting on joining in his own dirgo, as he lay upon his bier

-a butcher's cratch, borrowed from the slaugh-er bouse in the lane.
"After the play, O'W, told me he had bad luck at Dundringham, and feared he should not be all to open there. He owed the proprietors a year's rent, and they insisted on payment before reoccapation. O'W. did very well with his six towns, but he was an extravagant man, and gambled fearfully. I tried to cheer him up, and then descended the stone staircase to dress for the demon in the pantomime.

descended the stone staircase to dress for the demon in the pantomime.

"No scouter had my feet touched the floor than a sudden chill selzed them. I looked down and saw that the bricks were wet—there was water at least two inches deep upon them. I asked what was the matter, but nobody seemed to know. Little Canks, dressed as clown, was telling Judson, dressed for harlequin, of his triumph at his last benefit, and how his 'leap' had been encored. I sat down in my chair, and took off my wig and leg armor. I was unbackling my brasstplate, when I heard a tremendous noise—a noise as if when I heard a tremendous noise-a noise as if the whole theatre were failing on us with a ter-rific crash. With the quick instinct of fear, every man rushed to the staircase. Half across the cel-lar we were met by a vast volume of water, which ng like a furnace, tumbled in upon us, and

roaring like a furnace, tumbled in upon us, and lashed us back.

"The brickwork of the dam or river wall had given way, and the flood was upon us.

"It rolled in rapidly. We mounted upon the dressing-place, which was about three feet from the ground. The water soon covered our kness and stole swiftly higher and higher, till it reached my chin. I thought my time had come, when my foot struck against my dressing-case, an article about eightenn inches high. I stood upon it, and, my head and shoulders free, looked out upon the black death around me.

"Had it not been for my poor little dressing-case, I should not now be alive to tell this story. As it was, I felt the greatest difficulty it keeping my footing against the strong powerful, cruel flood.

"The inundation had evidently gained its level.
The surface of the water just touched the bottom of the hoop in which the candles were stack. The noise ceased, save a lashing and surging at the sides of our wet tumbs. Shall I ever forget the sight? The flare of the candles reflected in the black, slimy pool, the low ceiling, the hall-light, the flithy smell of the putruseent water the rolling empty bottles, the floating chairs, the horrer and the awe of knowing that the few frail planks on which we stood could not long support our weight. The row of eight living hoads against the walls; Canks, with his clown's paint swept off, but the wig, with its three grotesque tails, still sticking out from his ashy, fear-palsied face.

"I felt the boards beneath me crack. I shut my eyes tightly, prepared for death, and prayed to God for myself, and my wife and my children. "At that moment we heard a burst of applause above us, and Tolldrum, our low comedian, began

"Bome time ago lived near this place,
In one of the streets of the town,
A respectable man who was called
By the neighborhood Gentleman Brown,
Yery often fine parties he gave,
At which in champagne you might drawn;
And was truth and a fact, the whole street
Was jealous of Gentleman Brown.
Joskarv-lesers-outh.

The planks bepeath us still remained fire The planks beneath us still remained firm I beard a silast. I opened my eves, and looked out upon the wall again. I saw Judson, who had thrown binnell into the flood, swimming towards the stancase. At every stroke he was impeded by the chairs, tables, and lumber floating about bim. If he succeeded in gaining the stairs he could inform those above of our entimberent. To be rescued, assistance must be immediate. In a few minutes, if we except drowning, the feat, pent up air of our dungeon would have wiffed up.

have writed up. bounded upon Judson. He struck out brevely. We watched him with nager hope and sickening fear. As he swam by the hose, his foot kicked it, and the can lies it contained fell into the purish flood.

PAH was outhness!

"The agory of the moment was supreme!

"In the assence of light to guide him, Judson, even if he keps affest, could not reach the assence of then there was the weight of the wet dress and heavy spangles upon his less and body! I listered! I heard a groan; he had sunk to rise to more. 'I have been a wicked man, eried the voice of

Canks from out the darkness, but I repent, and truly, I cannot hold on much longer. Good-bye! God bless you all! We cannot see, but we can ienr each other. Say, 'God bless you, back again "God bless you?" said the voices, slowly and fearfully, "The solemn words mingled with the repet)

on of the chorus of the countryong single, bove our heads. above our heads.

"The uppers of death were rising round us—
and what a death! To die to the sound of song
and mask, pentup in a wet charact-house. I
tried to shout, but my voice failed. I heard a
confined sound of prayer, and joined in it.

"The water girgled in our cars as we implored
aprecy death or light!"

A building are in force in over our heads and

"A bri than stream burst in over our heads, and beard a noise of voices!
"Judson had reached the stage. I heard him

say -- Hold on! Hold on, lads! Here's help! Deliverance!'
"The centre trap in the stage had been opened."
"The centre trap in the stage had been opened." planks together to fleat to us.
"A voice shouled — There's no time to love.
Here's a rope! jump towards it, and we'll stag on up!"

"As the same moment a rope with a noose in

it was lowered; but that end of the trap nearest to us was at a distance of four feet, and conse-quently there were four feet of water and floating obstructions between us and the rope.
"A number of voices shouted 'Leap!' I was pearest, and made the first sitempt. Recommending my soul to God, and knowing that my rother actors would not leave my wife and children to starve, I closed my eyes, and leapt.

"I caught the rope; my left arm and my head went in the middle of the noose. The shock clanged me down into the fifthy water till my ect touched the cellar floor—at the same moment lost my hold of the rope. I gave myself up, or I feared that they would draw the rope up rom me. There was a buzzing in my ears as I hrust forth my arm in desperation. I caught the rope again, and felt myself hauled upwards, something struck me on the head. The foul water filled my mouth, my senses realed; and my

water filled my mouth, my senses realed; and my was that I should faint and lose my grasp of the few twisted strands between me and doom. I tried hard to keep my consciousness. It was in vain. All I tumember was a sensation of quick metion and of dazzling light.

"When I returned to sense, I found myself lying upon the stage. All my companions had been saved but one, poor tipsy Foljambe.

"It was a strange sight to see us kneel round the closed trap, in our solled, torn stage bravery, and thank Henven for our deliverance.

"Where is Arthur?" asked Mrs. Foljambe. 'Where is Arthur?' asked Mrs. Foljambe

"We rose and looked at each other. There was a dead silence.
"'Oh' shrieked the poor woman, who had just heard of our danger, and had run down from her room half dressed. 'He is dead! He is dead! "She tore open the trap, and would have plunged headforemost had we not held her back.

Her screams alarmed the audience, some of whom jumped on to the stage, and came behind "The trap was closed, and the bereaved wife was in a fit of violent hysteries, when a voice was heard to say :-"What's the matter? Has anything hap-"It was Foljambe, who had thrown his coat and

trousers over his Peruvian dress, and been out to the nearest public house. "I pass over a description of how Foljambe was received by his wife—how she sobbed over him, and said:—'And to think that this morning I wished you dead, my darling, and how near my whighed wishes were fulfilled!' Foljambe took it all as a tribute to his superior merits, and forgave his wife with heroic self-denial. Years after when she remonstrated with him, he used to re berthat three pennyworth of gin once saved his life. "'Well, said O'Warreboyle, 'let us be thankful

nobody's been drowned, for now we can get on with the pantomime!"
"Here little Canks broke in with tremendous wrath, and rebuked his manager—for daring to wish men that moment rescued from a dreadfu leath to tumble and make faces, and swore that acting could induce him 'to clown' that night. O'Warreboyle scowled; but feeling that he had no choice but to yield, was going before the cur-tain to make an apology, when the two strange men I had seen in the morning walked up and arrested him.

"Old Propper, in consideration of his noble sentiments as 'Rolla,' became his ball. The debt was only £40, and Sticknam told the audience what had happened. They left the theatre grum-bling loudly. They said that they had paid their money to see the pantomime, and it was a swindle not to play it.
"We never acted in the theatre after, but had

we never acted in the thearte step, out had a benefit at the Town Hall. My wife was very grateful for my escape, and said to me the next day, 'What a pity, Adolphus, that your suit of gold leather armor is entirely spoiled, and will never be fit to wear again.'"

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